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Arnold Friberg is arguably the most influential artist on Latter-day Saint scriptural art. His depictions of the people and the landscape of the Book of Mormon are well known to Latter-day Saints. This article explains the genesis and completion of Friberg’s series of twelve Book of Mormon paintings and gives the author’s own observations on each painting.
The Book of Mormon Art of Arnold Friberg

"Painter of Scripture"

Vern Swanson
Preliminary sketch for Lehi and His People Arrive in the Promised Land. Courtesy Arnold Friberg.
Arnold Friberg, arguably more than any other artist, established for Latter-day Saints what Book of Mormon people, landscapes, and events might have looked like. His vision of the Nephites and Lamanites has become so imbedded in our mind’s eye that many of us still tend to judge all representations of Nephites and Lamanites against the standard he gave us.

Many of today’s active Latter-day Saint artists have been deeply influenced by Friberg. Not all, of course, are pleased with the familiar images bequeathed to us by the senior artist—the wide-shouldered Aryan men and the slender, vulnerable women they are regularly shown protecting. His conception of how Book of Mormon events and heroes should be represented has tended to sweep aside alternative artistic concepts in the same manner that Picasso, for instance, dominated for a time the secular art scene at the peak of his creative work.

The primary aim of this article is to tell how Friberg’s 12 definitive Book of Mormon paintings came to be created and to shed added light on them by having the artist explain what he had in mind when he conceived and executed them. In recent months Friberg has been kind to spend time freely with the author to clarify these matters. Coincidentally, this year has seen renewed public interest in these paintings. All 12 originals have been displayed in a special section of the new Conference Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, and an interview with Friberg was televised in April to mark the release of a set of finely crafted reproductions of his Book of Mormon paintings.

The Artist’s Background

Friberg was born in Illinois in 1913 to Scandinavian immigrant parents. Later the family moved to Phoenix, Arizona, where they joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and where Arnold grew up (he did not visit Utah until 1947). He recalled that his art career began when, as a youth, he painted signs and billboards, “making a man’s living at it since I was 13.” He did a correspondence course in art when he was 18, followed by a year at the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts. Two years later he returned to the academy for a second year.

He aspired to be, and has always considered himself to be, an illustrator, not an artist. During the Great Depression he made an adequate living in several aspects of commercial art, but his first fame came from calendar illustrations. In 1937, in Chicago, he produced his first Northwest Mounted Police calendar for the Northwest Paper Company. Over the next 35 years he drew well over 200 more calendar illustrations of the same genre, mastering there the broad-shouldered, muscular male figure that would characterize all the rest of his work. In 1946, after lengthy infantry service in Europe and the Pacific during World War II, the artist married Hedve Baxter of Utah.

In 1949 Friberg joined the faculty of the University of Utah to teach commercial art. Located in Salt Lake City, he hoped to paint on behalf of his church. He completed his first piece of religious art in 1950. The scene showed Richard Ballantyne, founder of the LDS Sunday School movement, conducting the pioneer Sunday School. It immediately became very popular and brought him to the attention of a patron who shortly thereafter would commission his Book of Mormon series.

Utah society at the time was not artistically sophisticated. The conventional view was that art’s primary purpose was didactic—to teach moral lessons.
Friberg fit very well into the role of a 1950s artist. He was a very able draftsman, and his narrative or realist manner sought to make each of his pieces an accurate glimpse of life as it had once been, virtually a visual aid for historically minded viewers. No other Utah or LDS artist had the training or experience to paint in the manner that he did. His natural talent and artistically straightforward style were aided by his traditional method: from his sketches and use of live models he made photographs, drawings, and oil studies before painting his canvases. He never short-circuited that painstaking process. The result was historically defining genre art that viewers could connect to their own ideas and feelings.

The Project Conceived and Launched

Adele Cannon Howells (1902–1951), president of the church’s Primary Association, the auxiliary organization charged with religious education of LDS children, felt that this artist whose painting of Richard Ballantyne had impressed her could teach Primary children in a unique way. She wanted him to receive a commission to produce a dozen paintings based on the Book of Mormon—one for each issue of the monthly Children’s Friend, the organization’s magazine for children. This art, she hoped, would inspire the young with heroic views of the great religious leaders in the Nephite scripture.

Sister Howells was in a unique social position to take such action. She was educationally advantaged by virtue of her family background. As a granddaughter of Angus Cannon, brother of George Q. Cannon of the church’s First Presidency, she belonged to one of Utah’s elite families. The Cannons combined comparative wealth (on the local economic scale) with social, political, and ecclesiastical prominence. That position carried with it a sense of obligation to benefit and lift her people and the “Deseret” cultural region. She had an active and creative mind that had been exposed to literature and art by virtue of schooling and travel far beyond the norm. It was not strange on her part to think of commissioning an artist. Furthermore, the fact that her ancestry was prominent in the church in the late 19th and early 20th centuries gave her confidence to take a personal action that might have made others hesitate.

Since the magazine’s budget was limited, her first thought was to ask the church to underwrite this project. It would not be cheap. For an artist of Friberg’s stature the total cost would be significant for that day (in fact, he was eventually paid $1,000 per painting). When her request for a special appropriation was denied, she decided that if the project was going to be done, she would have to support it personally. Friberg relates: “Her last act in life [in 1951], the night she died, was to arrange for the sale of some property to pay for the project. She didn’t live even to see one of the paintings done.”

The work began in late 1950. First came the process of selecting topics. From a staggering number of possibilities, Sister Howells and the artist picked those that were thought to capture moments of the greatest doctrinal and historical importance. Friberg, however, selected the final 12 based on their artistic possibilities.

The artist did preliminary research toward the accuracy of the portrayals he had in mind. Unlike biblical scenes—for which the exact location of major events more or less defined landscape, architecture,
dress, armor, food, and utensils—Book of Mormon scenes could not be based on definitive geographical and cultural settings. Friberg calls himself a “painter of scripture,” but in order to prepare a visual expression of scenes from the text, he wanted expert guidance on such points. In 1951 he sought out Professor M. Wells Jakeman in the Department of Archaeology at Brigham Young University for technical advice. John L. Sorenson, who was a graduate student in the department at the time, recalls overhearing the conversation in which Jakeman told Friberg that he could not help. The professor was reluctant to commit himself prematurely, as he saw it, to match anecdotes from the Nephite record with specific data on cultural contexts that were still at that time unclear.3 The dilemma posed for the painter by this lack of authoritative guidance caused him to rely less on archaeological reconstruction than on common sense.

Friberg came face to face with the need for pragmatism in representing context in the first painting, entitled The Brother of Jared Sees the Finger of the Lord. A key problem was similar to that before Michelangelo when he chose to paint the finger of God in the Sistine Chapel. Should the Lord’s finger be shown actually touching the 16 transparent stones that the brother of Jared asked to be made luminous? After all, the Lord does have a finger and a hand, as the account in Ether 3 makes clear. “The brother of Jared,” says Friberg, “fully expected the stones to be lighted. It was seeing the finger that astonished and terrified him.”4 Friberg met the artistic problem by painting the scene from behind the praying man with light emanating from the stones so blinding that it rules out any representation of a finger. Ted Schwarz, author of a book on Friberg’s art, recognized that “the painting thus succeeds in conveying great visual power without creating theological controversy.”5

The First Eight Paintings Completed

The second work, Lehi in the Wilderness Discovers the Liahona, was figuratively much more complex than the brother of Jared painting. The scene to be depicted was this: “As my father arose in the morning, and went forth to the tent door, to his great astonishment he beheld upon the ground a round ball of curious workmanship; and it was of fine brass. And within the ball were two spindles; and the one pointed the way whither we should go into the wilderness” (1 Nephi 16:10). Of course, the artist had no physical model of this divinely prepared “compass” to which to refer in composing the scene. From a 1986 interview we learn how he viewed his predicament:

How large was the Liahona? How did they see the pointers? Did he open the lid? Was it made of open work? What did they do with it when they weren’t using it? Did they let it roll around on the deck of the ship?6

The artist’s personality comes through clearly in a comment that contrasts his artistic challenges (those of “Mr. Pictures”) with the advantage of a writer (“Mr. Words”), who could avoid potential criticism by simply writing nothing about the appearance or dimensions of the Liahona:

[But] now we come to Mr. Pictures. That’s me! I can’t duck. There is no tube of paint that says, “Don’t know.” I have to come to grips with it. You have to decide if [the Liahona] is going to be this big. Now I don’t know any more than [the next guy], but I have to paint something. I decided on a handy little size that they could hold in their hand, and I made a little tripod stand for it to sit in. Someone will actually demand, “Then how dare you paint it, if you don’t know?” . . . All you can do is research the period as close as you can and picture something that makes sense. You just come up with something that somehow fulfills your idea of what it looked like.7

With this painting it became obvious that Friberg’s representation of the male physique would be of splendid proportions and appearance. The proliferation of figures across the artist’s canvases created the sense of another race of people far different from what any viewers had encountered before. This strangeness cut two ways. For some viewers the figures elicited a special reverence, but for others they suggested a surreal, mythic civilization borne by heroic European-style men in ancient America not at all in keeping with usual notions about the pre-Columbian peoples.

The dramatic power and spiritual forcefulness of the paintings concerned some church leaders who were accustomed to the rather passive Book of Mormon art of the time. But Friberg, who had always admired great historical figures, envisioned the Nephites as heroic and “larger than life”8 and desired to convey that vitality in his art. He was not just in-
venting the rules of engagement for a set of new creative paintings; he was, as it were, creating a wonderful new race of God’s children.

Sometime following Adele Cannon Howells’s death, the artist began meeting with senior General Authorities about technical and theological issues involved in further paintings. They were concerned about appropriateness and taste as well as possible mistakes in the light of doctrine and archaeological findings. The artist’s mode of working with them was to take account of their views and then to resolve matters according to his own artistic judgment, hoping to receive as much forgiveness as permission.

“It is important to remember that these paintings were done first of all for children,” said Friberg, who believed this could be achieved without painting “in some lightweight ‘kiddy style.’” Each completed canvas appeared in the Children’s Friend. Friberg’s young audience apparently reacted positively to the paintings, and adults found them appealing as well. Millions of reproductions subsequently appeared as lithographs, special editions, and, most important, illustrations in the missionary versions of the Book of Mormon itself. This wide distribution of his art made Friberg the “Father” of Book of Mormon subject painters and, along with Minerva Teichert, one of the church’s two foremost painters of scripture.

Hiatus

After eight of the dozen paintings were completed, with the others in sketch form, a life-changing event happened. The artist was visited by a publisher from Sweden, Herman Stolpe, to whom Friberg presented a set of the eight Book of Mormon prints then available. (The prints had won top national honors in a competition held by the National Lithographic Society.) Subsequently Stolpe visited Cecil B. DeMille, the famous Hollywood film director. DeMille asked if Stolpe knew of any European artists of religious subjects who could work on his coming megafilm, The Ten Commandments. Stolpe recommended only one artist, Friberg, and passed the set of prints on to DeMille. That recommendation was echoed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art when Paramount Pictures inquired there about American artists of religious subjects. The result was that in 1954 the filmmaker contracted Friberg as chief artist-designer for the motion picture.

Friberg gladly dropped the Book of Mormon art project for the time being, not least because of his frustration at the scrutiny by others of “every detail in every picture.” The work he would now do on the movie would actually further his ability to finish off the scripture paintings when he resumed that project. Friberg had always been inspired by Gustave Doré, the French historical and biblical artist, and DeMille now added another source of influence by demanding that all his staff study the work of the English artist Lawrence Alma-Tadema (d. 1912), who had painted ancient Greek and Roman scenes with uncanny realism and authenticity.

The kind of realism modeled for Friberg by these sources and demanded by cinema work were welcomed by him. He had always scorned modern art, saying in 1954,

I have plenty of enemies . . . among artists who resent my earning a living. They think I should go off and starve while painting something “significant.” I am doing what I want to do—painting pictures people want and understand. I have no burning ambition to create the kind of “art” which the confused critics praise for its “plastic significance,” “fluid lines,” and “inner awareness,” or (heaven forbid) “must be understood on three levels.”

He completed 15 major paintings for the film, and Paramount showcased them in an exhibit that toured the world. The exhibit included Friberg’s 12 portraits of the movie’s stars and many sketches in pencil, watercolor, and oil. In a recent interview Friberg emphasized that these were not paintings made from the motion picture—rather, the motion picture took its artistic direction from the paintings.
Back to the Studio

After four years in Hollywood, Friberg returned to Salt Lake City to face up to the uncompleted Book of Mormon project. He had promised Sister Howells on her deathbed that he would complete the series, come what may.

The major obstacle, in the artist’s view, was resistance by church leaders to LDS artists’ painting or sculpting representations of the Savior. The source of this practice of the church is obscure and probably complex, but at least at this time and for some time afterward the practice was followed. Oddly, the work of non-LDS artists (such as Harry Anderson) was not held to the same rule, and their representations of the Master were commonly used in church instructional materials. For Friberg’s Book of Mormon series the greatest difficulty was with the scene Christ Appearing to the Nephites. His original proposal for a painting was not approved. He substituted another concept entirely that showed the Savior at a distance descending from the sky.

The Artist’s Observations on His Paintings

Our comprehension of what is before our eyes in the 12 Book of Mormon paintings is enhanced by the artist’s comments about his intentions and methods. His remarks appear in quotation marks.

*The Brother of Jared Sees the Finger of the Lord* (Ether 3). “Cecil B. DeMille liked this painting so much that it became the basis for Moses’ costume [in the movie *The Ten Commandments*] when he kneeled before the burning bush. I didn’t copy it exactly, but DeMille wanted the same feeling in the burning bush scene that he had witnessed here with the brother of Jared.”

*Lehi in the Wilderness Discovers the Liahona* (1 Nephi 16). “Lehi was a wealthy man, and he wouldn’t be dressed like some poor Bedouin. He’d have rich clothing on. This is the way you tell the story in pictures. By the selection of the clothing you try to show the character of the person. Working on this picture, I rose early to observe the cool pearly light of early dawn, so different from warmer sunset light.”

*Abinadi before King Noah* (Mosiah 11–13). “I composed it the opposite of the well-known principle in art, the ‘principle of the Jewel.’ . . . It is like a jewel setting—the central figure is the most interesting part. You use the strongest color and the strongest and most vibrant contrast around the center of interest, and then it goes into surrounding neutrals. I reversed it here for the purposes of this picture. Against the simplicity of Abinadi in his grey prison garb was the opulence of the court. The richness of the colors set off this simple, humble man.

“And the jaguars—I spent days studying them at the zoo. There were several reasons for putting them in. One thing, it gives a royal touch to have the animals chained to the throne. They are not leopards; they are jaguars, which are more compact animals than leopards. Jaguars are found only in Central and
South America, so they sort of help define the geographical setting. Animals are very sensitive to supernatural power. . . . The jaguars are snarling because they sense the awesome power that is surrounding Abinadi.

“Then there are the priests of King Noah. I had somewhat in mind the man back here at the right might be young Alma. He was mightily impressed by the courageous testimony of Abinadi, so much so that he became a prophet.”

This is the artist’s favorite painting of the entire set. The figure of Abinadi held special meaning for Arnold Friberg. When his family was converted in 1921 in Arizona through the missionary efforts of a Brother Altop, Arnold was seven years old. He was baptized the next year and remembers fondly the missionary teaching his family received from Brother Altop. As Friberg was at work painting this picture, Brother Altop visited him in Salt Lake City. Lean and muscular from years of working as a carpenter, the revered friend was immediately put to work posing as Abinadi.

_Nephi Subdues His Rebellious Brethren_ (1 Nephi 17). “I tried to show a fine, strong young man. Nephi himself records that he was large of stature. And, of course, this shows his forge. It [was] a big enough job to undertake to build a ship, but he had to start before that. He didn’t even have any tools. He had to melt the ore out of the mountain and then fashion a crude forge, even to make the tools. Talk about starting from scratch!”

_Lehi and His People Arrive in the Promised Land_ (1 Nephi 18). “Yes, this shows the ship that Nephi built. Nobody knows what his ship looked like. All we are told is that it was not built after the manner of men. . . . I don’t think God would instruct Nephi to build some very weird thing never seen in heaven or earth just to prove that it had divine help. It would be some perfectly sensible principle of shipbuilding that was perhaps in advance of what was known to shipbuilders at that time.

“This moment is when, with great relief, they finally sighted land, so for the moment the fighting between them is forgotten in the excitement of seeing land.

“The birds are not seagulls, but rather swallow-tailed roseate terns, which are found in the tropical waters around Central America. Such details helped define the geographic location for this painting. Lehi is looking heavenward in thanks, while the other guys are pretty much like in a pirate picture, shouting ‘Land Ho!’ The huge ropes were from the movie _The Ten Commandments_, and they were brought from Egypt. The Bedouins there weave these immense ropes by hand.”

_Jesus Christ Appears unto the Nephites_ (3 Nephi 8–11). “The reason I made him [the Savior] that small and so high up was so that no one could nail me—‘How do you know how he looked?’ So I put this little figure up in the sky and made it so small that no one could quibble over details like facial features.”
Two Thousand Stripling Warriors (Alma 53, 56). “They call them striplings—some say, ‘the Boy Scout army.’ No! No! They were young men. They were like David. They talk about David going out and taking on Goliath. They said, ‘He is a man of war and you are just a youth.’ That doesn’t mean that he was a little eight-year-old. In his statue of David, Michelangelo captures a splendid young man, athletic, maybe not as mature as men of war, but still a boy compared to them. That is the way I figure these youths were.”

“I put Helaman on a horse. . . . Of course the Book [of Mormon] does not say that Helaman rode a horse, but in [certain] other places it mentions them. Ammon was out taking care of the king’s horses [at one point].”

Captain Moroni Raises the Title of Liberty (Alma 46). “We are reading the thought itself that Captain Moroni expressed on his banner. Now I am supposed to picture how he wrote it. He didn’t write it in English. English was not yet invented. He wrote it in Hebrew. Mormon said he was engraving the plates in Reformed Egyptian because it takes less space. But if Moroni could write it in Hebrew it would be a lot clearer. . . . So I went to the Rabbi here [in Salt Lake City] and asked him to write the message in what would have been the common characters Lehi brought with him. It didn’t look anything like present-day Jewish script [second line of the Hebrew text below]. That squarish letter we now know as Jewish came in closer to the time of Christ. [The first line of the Hebrew text below is more ancient and more correct], so I put it on the flag even though there were those who insisted that I letter it in English.”

Ammon Defends the Flock of King Lamoni (Alma 17). “As they came at him [Ammon], he cut off their arms, and the servants carried the arms and showed them to the king. I didn’t dare show the arms being cut off. It would make a great present-day horror movie, wouldn’t it? But I guess that’s the way they did missionary work in those days! I showed the moment just before the onslaught, to show that he is ready to take them on.”

Alma Baptizes at the Waters of Mormon (Mosiah 18:8–10, 30). “The eloquent words of Mosiah are what I was painting: ‘How beautiful’ were the waters. . . . Who knew what it looked like? ’How beautiful’ those waters looked to those ‘who there came to the knowledge of their Redeemer’! This is the verse that I was really illustrating. . . . I put the waterfall in just to make it more beautiful. The foreground guards are alert, aware of the danger from King Noah’s soldiers.”

Samuel the Lamanite on the Wall (Helaman 13–16). “I have shown a great wind coming up, a great storm. It doesn’t say there was a storm, but I think the wind would have set up a storm at the same time—everything conspired to knock Samuel down off the wall and to confuse the aim of the archers and slingers. . . . Somehow they were not able to hit him, and he was able to escape over the city wall. I have tried to reconstruct the buildings of ancient America that have been uncovered.”

Mormon Bids Farewell to a Once Great Nation (Mormon 6–7). After noting that this was the last canvas painted in the commissioned series and that it was also the last scene chronologically in the Book of Mormon sequence, Friberg described his ideas of the piece in his authoritative, booming voice: “Now we are talking about the last picture. This is after the last battle. This is downright Wagnerian, isn’t it? Of course, I love Wagner. I love the great hero tales of Siegfried. The story of Moroni is the story of Siegfried. Every hero’s story is the story of Siegfried. This represents the solemn scene . . . [with] heaps of bodies [lying about] . . . So I had to picture the carnage and death, but I tried to do it tastefully. Not a lot of blood and wounded bodies. I tried to capture the götterdämmerung feeling such as Wagner could have captured in music! This is the end of a nation and an entire race. Mormon was . . . wounded in the fight, and so they have laid him down there on the hilltop. Things like this one last leaf on the tree had their own little symbolism. You see the buzzards circling, because there is death all around. Blood on the sun! This is really Wagnerian tragedy.
“Also you notice this flag [behind Moroni on the pole] is the same flag raised long ago by Captain Moroni when he rallied the Nephites to fight for freedom. I think they would have preserved . . . that flag of Captain Moroni’s, the old Title of Liberty. And I think at the end they would have said, ‘We weren’t worthy to live under Moroni’s flag. Let us at least die like men under the flag.’ If I had been making a motion picture, I would have them get out the old flag of Captain Moroni’s and say, ‘At least let us fight and die under it if we are men at all.’”

Aftermath

The series of 12 paintings set art on Book of Mormon subjects on a new trajectory. Friberg was now a “painter of scripture.” The paintings were exhibited for years in the church’s visitors’ center and museum, then called the Information Bureau, on the south side of Temple Square. After that facility was removed, the Friberg art was kept in storage for years. Finally, in the year 2000, the pieces were brought out and displayed in the new Conference Center adjacent to Temple Square.

By the end of his work on the commissioned dozen paintings, Friberg was dissatisfied with his relationship with those who had supervised his work. What further religious art he undertook would be of his own volition and without sponsorship, and he did continue to paint small religious works based on both the Bible and the Book of Mormon. In 1963 Friberg completed a painting on his own, outside the commission, that showed the Lord among the Nephites in a more intimate setting, similar to what he had initially wanted to do. It was advertised for sale in the April 1965 Improvement Era as part of their Gospel-in-Art print series and entitled The Risen Lord, but it apparently was soon removed from the series.  

Friberg’s most recent canvas is a large nativity scene called The Night That Christ Was Born. In the end analysis, Arnold Friberg’s Book of Mormon series produced the most influential images of art applied to LDS scripture. His paintings stand, even today, as the boldest record showing what can happen when dedicated artist and willing sponsor work in collaboration. The success of the series is measured by its continuing popularity among Latter-day Saints and its value as a missionary tool. The crucible of their creative origin is a reminder that “great art is never easy.” Friberg forged them with the greatest of emotion and the deepest of talent.
nished a product similar in appearance (see Lechman, “Pre-Columbian Sur-
face Metalurgy”); Joseph Holzer and Gay Stresser-Pearl, “The Haustec Region: A Second Focus for the Pro-
duction of Bronze Alloys in Ancient Mesoamerica,” Science 257, 28 August 1992, 1215). Moreover, Nephi’s original plates might have been of different composition than Mormon’s plates.

The Book of Mormon Plates

Janne M. Sjodahl

Like the article itself, the following notes are as they appeared in the original article from the April 1923 Improvement Era, with the exception that publication data has been added in brackets.

1. This is quoted from Gregg Thomas,
2. The author (21 May 1999), in the au-
3. The original edition, published at
5. The account related must have been
given by the Prophet himself to his mother. The pages cited correspond
to the 1902 edition of this book, revised by George A. Smith and Elias Smith
and published by the Improvement Era.
6. See Noel A. Carmack, “Images of Christ
in Latter-day Saint Visual Culture,” The Interpreter’s Bible, ed. George
Arthur Battrick et al. Although I do not agree with the conclusions of the article cited here, it represents the thinking of many Bible scholars re-
garding the dating of 2 Peter and why scholars reject the authorship of Peter’s
epistle. The claim that the epistles of John were written after his gospel is
much more widely accepted and is probably correct. The dating of John’s epistles
also confirmed in the article
cited above.
7. The brother of Jared was one of those
who had written his vision of the end of
the world. The vision was recorded in the sealed portion of the plates given
to Joseph Smith. These will be dis-
cussed later.
8. Brigham Young, in Journal of Dis-
courses, 19:38. The incident is quoted in evidence of the existence of plates
and not as a discussion of Book of Mormon geography. Whether the cove-
name was in New York or was a vision given
to Joseph and Oliver is irrelevant to the
discussion here.
9. John L. Sorenson correspondence with
Arnold Friberg notes (February 2001),
SMFA Library.
10. Morgan told Joseph Smith that the ful-
ness of the gospel was found in the Book of Mormon plates (Joseph
Smith—History 1:34). The Doctrine
and Covenants repeatedly states that the Book of Mormon contained the ful-
ness of the gospel (see D&C 1:22–23;
14:10; 20:9; 27:5; 35:12, 17; 39:61;
42:12, 45:28, 66:2). For a definition of the fulness of the gospel given
within the Book of Mormon, see 1 Nephi
27:13–21.
11. See Sidney B. Sperry, Doctrine and Covenants Compendium (Salt Lake City:
Bookcraft, 1966). Nephi speaks of how “in that day shall the Lord of hosts
be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, and for the rear
of his people” (Isaiah 28:5). The context of that chapter is Ephraim, or northern
Israel, in the day of its wickedness prior to being taken into captivity by
Assyria in 721 B.C. Typical of Old Testament prophecy, a message of doom (captivity) is followed by a mes-
sage of hope referring to the restora-
tion of the latter days as “in that day.”
12. Joseph Fielding Smith believed that
when they were given the keys of the kingdom (see his Doctrines of Salvation,
comp. Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City:
Bookcraft, 1999], 2:165). The Lord has often used the mountain for his holy place when there were no tem-
ple available (as he did with Moses in Exodus 24:12–13; 31:18 and with Elijah in 1 Kings 19). While we have no direct
scriptural statement that the “rich treasure” mentioned in D&C 103 is
genealogical records, the above scrip-
tures suggest that such records will constitute at least part of that legacy.
One of the most significant purposes of
the latter-day restoration is the